



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
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Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into access to services
and information in Auslan

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Transcription of Auslan to written English

File source: 'Auslan Inquiry Video LL' - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pmv_zx2mGf4

Hello, my name is Lasairn Leong (sign name provided).

I want to share my experiences with you.

The first one... my father has cancer, so I need to attend hospital to see the specialist doctor, an oncologist.

The first time my father and myself went to the hospital. On arrival the nurse directed us to a room and told to sit down at a phone table. I said, 'I'm deaf'. The nurse shrugged in reply. I was stumped and started to panic trying to work out what to do. I thought about asking a nearby hearing person to help me out. I couldn't ask a nearby person as they were likely to be cancer patients or were with cancer patients. Then I thought maybe asking the nurse? I really needed to be involved in this appointment to support my father who has cancer. I found this a struggling experience.

It was already clear from this that there needs to be a system. They knew that I was deaf and needed interpreting access, but I am still running into barriers. To date, it's been a case of 'Please book an interpreter' and/or 'No, we cannot because of lockdowns', or nothing is done with the interpreter request and so on.

Another experience is when I went to the GP and informed them that I was deaf. They replied 'Ok, we will let you know' and I sat down. People came in and went before me over a period of time. I then reminded them that I am deaf. The vaccination nurse/doctor said 'Oh, I called out your name and thought that you had gone. Oh! Sorry!'. This was incredibly frustrating.

What I have liked in the past at Access Canberra (or previously the RTA), was their numbered ticketing system. Once you have a ticket, you would sit down. I could visually see the ticket numbers appearing on the screen. When my ticket number appeared, I would then go to the window screen. I found this system very deaf friendly and it really suits us. It would be ideal if this system was used elsewhere. I understand there is a cost but it's very visual and very deaf friendly. It would be just so easy to follow this system in banks, offices, etc and minimize our stress or anxiety – at least a visual system or along those lines.

About education, myself, I am a teacher of the deaf and I educate deaf children under the ACT education system. I have observed a number of deaf children who are isolated and they need to mingle with each other regularly.

It is difficult to coordinate gatherings, pick ups and drop ups, time consuming to coordinate all this and so on. Additionally parents and teachers do not want these kids to miss classes.

The kids do need socialisation. How? One way is to have a deaf unit, led by a teacher of the deaf. I am the only teacher of the deaf who is deaf with all others being hearing. It would be nice for them to see deaf role models. A variety of deaf role models could be invited - deaf adults, deaf seniors etc. to meet them children at the deaf unit. The children would learn how to sign more naturally or allow them to develop their communication strategies, and this would also assist the parents in the development of the kids.

The health system would be involved by informing parents of deaf children of such facilities. Oralism is not the only communication method. There are also the signing and bilingualism methods and to expose the children to different communication options. It would be great if the Shepherd Centre did the same, as well as anybody who provides advisory/support services.

The wearing of masks has really hindered our ability to communicate. It's terrible. I've asked people to please take off their masks so that we can communicate more effectively and with less frustration. Few are reluctant to write things down. This reminds me of one doctor in relation to my father being in hospital for 3 days, and I visited my father frequently. Recently, not that far back, in fact this year, this doctor of an Asian appearance, refused flat out to remove his mask so I could know more about what was wrong with my father. This was despite me clearly showing that I was deaf and cannot hear. The doctor cited the hospital's policy of not being allowed to remove masks, but I do believe this is not accurate. The doctor did agree to use pen and paper with me, but it was a very limited and stifled communication. I was frustrated and just had to deal with this while caring for my father.

That's enough for now. But I do want to thank you for this opportunity. I do know there are many more barriers experienced by other deaf people out there. I moved from Sydney 2 years ago to here. Hoyts Cinemas provided several movies with captions, but I was disappointed with the much smaller list of movies that were captioned in the ACT. I believe that all movies should be captioned so that we have the option of seeing which movie titles at any time to give us pleasure in our lives.

Thank you and bye.